

A bibliometric analysis of work-life balance policies on employee performance

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Abstract

Work-Life Balance (WLB) Policies aim to balance employees' work and family life is a growing concern in developing nations compared to developed economies. This paper aims to provide a clear view of current dynamics and research diversification of literature in the field of work-life balance (WBL) policies on employee performance by using bibliometric analysis. Scopus database has been used for carrying out the bibliometric analysis based on 100 research papers published from 2000 to 2023 to see the trends of publications. The prominence of research is evaluated by publication trend, publisher, country, universities/research institution, frequency of citation and different keywords related to work-life balance, policies, and employee performance. The number of publications continues to increase after the year 2008. The region of reviewed papers is Nigeria, Kenya, the USA, the Philippines, India, Spain, South Africa, Romania, Jordan, Australia, Netherlands, Sweden, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Canada, Pakistan, and Malaysia. The United States, Spain and Nigeria have the highest rate of research publications, and the USA, Kenya, Nigeria Spain Netherlands Sweden, Bangladesh, and Romania countries focused on variables work-life balance policies, flexible working arrangements, workplace support, employee performance, employee satisfaction, retention, and organizational performance. The most common term used in the research is work-life balance policies. The novelty of this research paper is on the subject of WLB policies on employee performance using varied bibliographic approaches. Future studies avenues and recommendations and the study's limitations were also examined.

Keywords: Bibliometric analysis, employee, literature review, performance, Scopus, work-life balance.

1. Introduction

Work is considered an essential part of one's professional identification, and keeping it balanced with other life activities is a topic that is attaining tremendous importance and recognition, commonly known as work-life balance (Berman, 2015). The phenomena of work-life balance (WLB) were initiated in the 1930s, and since then, it has been viewed in terms of profound changes related to social, demographics and workplace advancement (Allen *et al.*, 2013; Melton & Meier, 2017). The modifications are made in response to various alterations in the labor market, involvement of women in the labor force, single parent in the workforce, 24/7 communication technology, quality of life desire etc. (Shabir & Gani, 2020). Thus, work-life balance policies in a company focus on how the employees maintain their personal and work lives efficiently and effectively (Rashmi & Kataria, 2021). The literature revealed that employees emphasized the work-life balance policies more than only focusing on income (Hasan & Teng, 2017; Oyewobi *et al.*, 2020; Wiradendi Wolor, 2020). Work-life balance policies impact is becoming more multi-disciplinary such as ICTs (Kelliher *et al.*, 2019). Thus, technological advancement creates a competitive environment, and employees cannot maintain their work-life balance (Hjálmsdóttir & Bjarnadóttir, 2021). Therefore work-life balance policies are becoming compulsory in the organization to attain employee satisfaction, performance, and productivity (Sumanarathna & Samarakoon, 2019; Shabir & Ghani, 2020).

Past studies have shown that work-life balance policies reflect the balance between employees' work and personal life (Au *et al.*, 2019; Robertson *et al.*, 2019), whereas, from a broader perspective, it is a contested term that possesses diverse meanings for different individuals (Lewis & Beauregard, 2018). As Obiageli *et al.* (2015) stated, the performance of employees affects all aspects of an organization, either is service delivery, efficiency, or interaction with employees. Hence to increase employee satisfaction and performance, the organization must design effective policies to boost the morale of employees. Similarly, Tamunomiebi and Oyibo (2020) reiterated employee performance in terms of how they develop a connection with the assigned tasks, organization, and fulfilment of organizational goals. However, great crises such as coronavirus (COVID-19) have drastically affected the viewpoint of work-life balance for millions of individuals. The drastic shift in work and overall operational activities of organizations has inevitably affected the work-life balance of employees (Bhumika, 2020). As the coronavirus has laid physical, mental, and emotional stress on employees, and they have to work at the same time from home by adopting a new working style, one of the pressing issues that have been witnessed across the globe during the pandemic is balancing work and personal life obligations (Corbera *et al.*, 2020; UToft, 2020).

Chaudhuri *et al.* (2020) emphasized the need for empirical evidence to examine the impact of work-life balance policies (WLBP) in an organizational context in developing countries due to globalization and employee retention through WLBP. In line with this, Akintoye and Ofobruku (2022) stressed the need for empirical work on the effects of staff welfare packages on performance. Past research highlights that Organization citizenship behavior (OCB) among individuals and groups is an important aspect that needs to be taken into account by the company for the successful organizational performance to achieve OCB organization-

developed WLBP (Chaudhuri *et al.*, 2020; Kalleberg & Dunn, 2016). Hence, WLBP is an essential issue in public and private organizations. If organizations cannot manage WLBP, it may lead to decreased employee satisfaction, productivity, and performance (Wiradendi-Wolor, 2020).

The biggest challenge is for parents' employees who fail to balance their work life and family, leading to health problems, dissatisfaction at work and psychological issues. (Hjálmsdóttir & Bjarnadóttir, 2021). Work-Life balance policies are an essential facet for employers and organizations. It not only affects employers' work and personnel life, but it is also a challenge for the organization to implement work-life balance policies properly and effectively (Obiageli *et al.*, 2015; Perrigino *et al.*, 2018). This paper intends to highlight the relationship between work-life balance policies and employee performance. After reviewing past studies, the present study aims to expand knowledge about the topic and showcase the bibliometric review of the literature.

2. Methodology

The methodology used for the present study is based on bibliometric and content analysis. The bibliometric analysis is based on approaches that provide qualitative and quantitative analysis of previous studies (Khan *et al.*, 2021). Bibliometric analysis has attained tremendous importance in business research, and its popularity is associated with the accessibility of bibliometric software such as Gephi, Leximancer, VOSviewer, and scientific databases such as Scopus and Web of Science. Furthermore, the shifting of bibliometric methodology from information science to business research is based on its utility for handling larger volumes of data (Donthu *et al.*, 2021). Prasad and Tata (2005) suggest the best technique to carry out the bibliometric analysis, which is based on the analysis of publications in a fair number of journals and the progress of publications along with years, including relevant areas. However, only some studies highlight that bibliometric analysis also focused on the number of citations, country, and authors where (Neely, 2005). Bibliometric analysis is considered a global approach to analyzing the current state of study fields (Mutschke *et al.*, 2011). The data for the present study were gathered during March 2022 using the Elsevier Scopus database based on different year slots. The leading search keywords for this study are based on research papers “work-life balance policies” and “employee performance” in the title or abstract. According to the data, the attest research articles are from 2008 and used the following query string for search; TITLE-ABS (“work-life balance policies * employee performance”) AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE, “j”) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, “ar”)) AND (EXCLUDE (PUBYEAR, 2023)). After applying this to the query string, almost 2000 documents appeared. Furthermore, more phrases were added in the query string to ensure not to include any review articles; after that, 400 articles possibly related to the bibliometric study. After examining the articles, almost 250 were review articles from the query string. In the next step, EIDs from the articles were noted, and in the subsequent search, we excluded EIDs from the search string so that it would not appear in the following search results. Thus, 100 articles were used in the final data analysis. Figure 1 depicts the process of data collection and Figure 2 illustrates the publication trends.

Figure 1. Process of Data collection

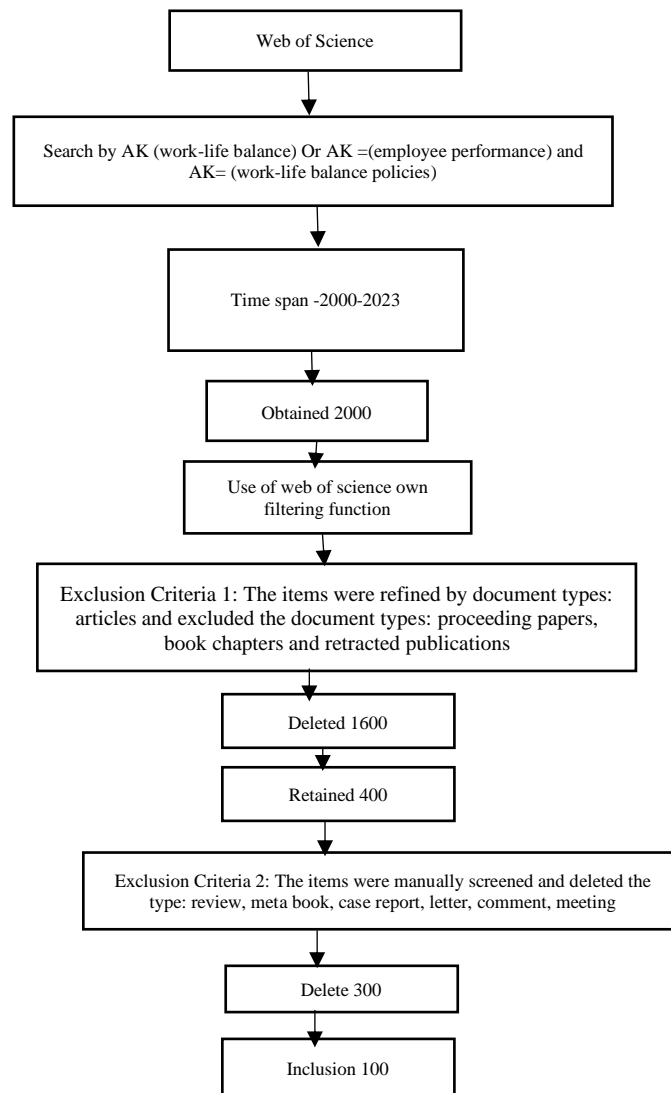
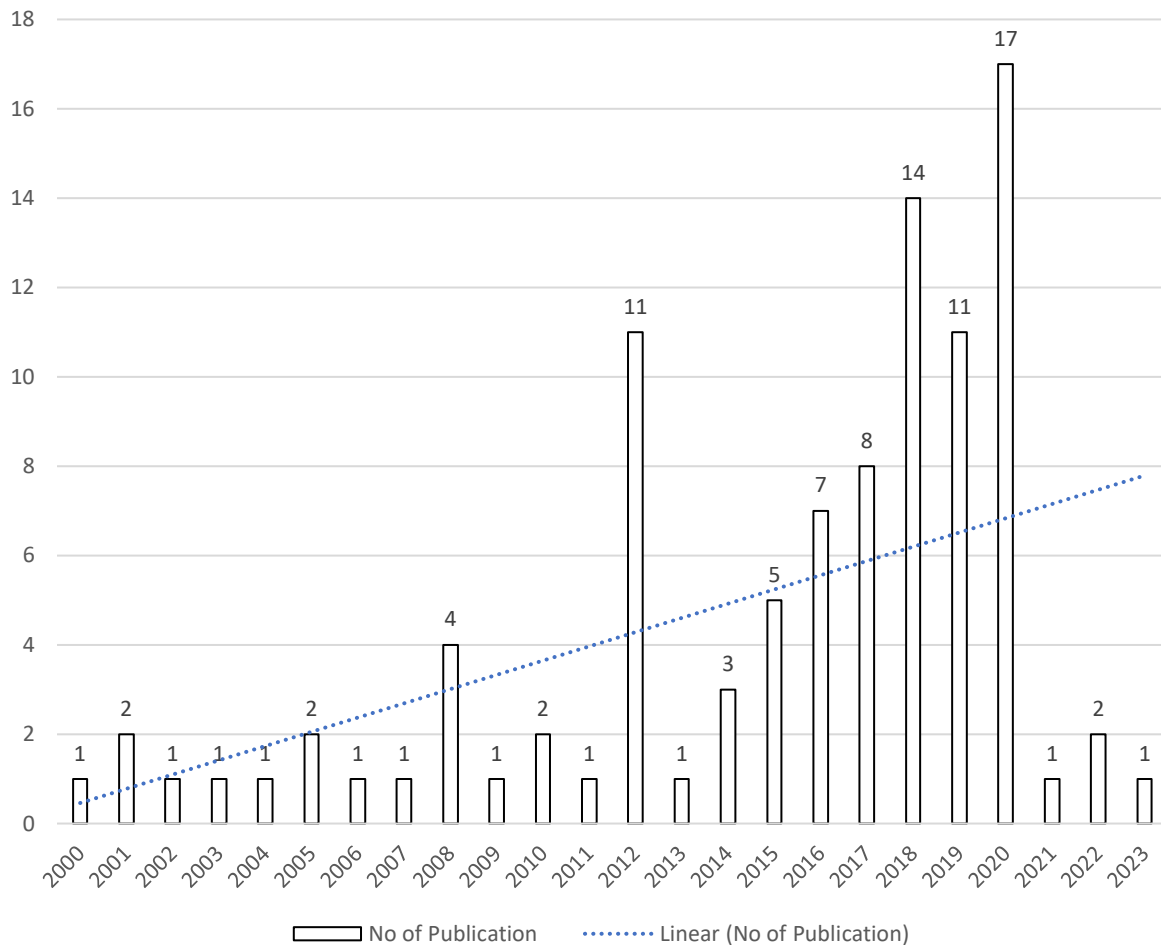


Figure 2. Publication Trends over time



3. Results

3.1 Analysis of Publications

After searching, 100 publications were found in the WOS database between 2000 and 2023. Figure 2 depicts the publication trends over time. It has been seen that number of publications in the field of work-life balance policies and employee performance increased after 2008 and rapidly developed over time, showing a positive trend overall. From the year 2012-2020, more than 40 articles were published.

3.2 Analysis of Journals

The included literature was arranged and organized based on the number of published articles resulting in top journals in terms of country and frequency of citation (Refer to Table 1)—the policies research literature related to work-life balance policies and employee performance. Among the top 10 journals with the highest number of frequencies of citations (481) from the USA (Community Work and Family), Routledge is followed by (European Research Studies), International Strategic Management Association, EU (395) citations from Romania and (Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources) Australian Human Resources Institute (158) citation from

Australia. The top ten journals are from Australia, Romania, South Africa, Spain, Kenya, Jordan, the Philippines, and Nigeria.

Table 1. Top 10 Journals by Publications

S.no	Title	Author	Periodicals	Journal Publishers	Country	Frequency of citations	Year
1	The relationship of perceived flexibility, supportive work life policies, and use of formal flexible arrangements and occasional flexibility to employee engagement and expected retention.	Richman, Amy L., Janet T. Civian, Laurie L. Shannon, E. Jeffrey Hill, and Robert T. Brennan	Community, work and family	Routledge.	USA	481	2008
2	The Ability of Work-Life Balance Policies to Influence Key Social/Organizational Issues.	Brough, Paula, Jackie Holt, Rosie Bauld, Amanda Biggs, and Claire Ryan.	Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources	Wiley black-well	Australia	158	2008
3	The role of work-life balance practices in order to improve organizational performance.	Lazar, Ioan, Codruta Osoian, and Patricia Iulia Ratiu.	European Research Studies,	International Strategic Management Association, EU	Romania	395	2010
4	Work-life balance policies: Challenges and benefits associated with implementing flexitime.	Downes Caroline, Koekemoer Eileen	SA Journal of Human Resource Management	AOSIS	South Africa	101	2011
5	The Impact of Family and Work-Life Balance Policies on the Performance of Spanish Listed Companies.	Diana Benito-Osorio, Laura Muñoz-Aguado, Cristina Villar	<u>Management</u>	CAIRN INFO	Spain	85	2014
6	Influence of work life balance policies on employee job satisfaction in Kenya's banking sector; a case of commercial banks in Nairobi central business district.	Mukururi, Jane Nyambura, and James Mark Ngari.	" IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science	International Organization of Scientific Research	Kenya	60	2014



7	The influence of work life balance on turnover intention in private hospitals: The mediating role of work life conflict.	Suifan, Taghrid S., Ayman Bahjat Abdallah, and Hannah Diab.	European Journal of Business and Management	European Open Science bimonthly.	Jordan	111	2016
8	Do firms implement work–life balance policies to benefit their workers or themselves?	Adame-Sánchez, Consolación, Tomás F. González-Cruz, and Clara Martínez-Fuentes	Journal of Business Research	<u>Elsevier</u>	Spain	86	2016
9	Employee satisfaction with work-life balance policies and organizational commitment: A Philippine study.	Kim, Ji Sung, and Sangyub Ryu.	Public administration and development	John Wiley and Sons Ltd	Philippines	62	2017
10	Work-Life Balance Initiative as a Predictor of Employees' Behavioural Outcomes.	Oludayo, O. A., H. O. Falola, Ahaka Obianuju, and Fatogun Demilade. "	Academy of Strategic Management Journal	Allied Business Academies	Nigeria.	106	2018

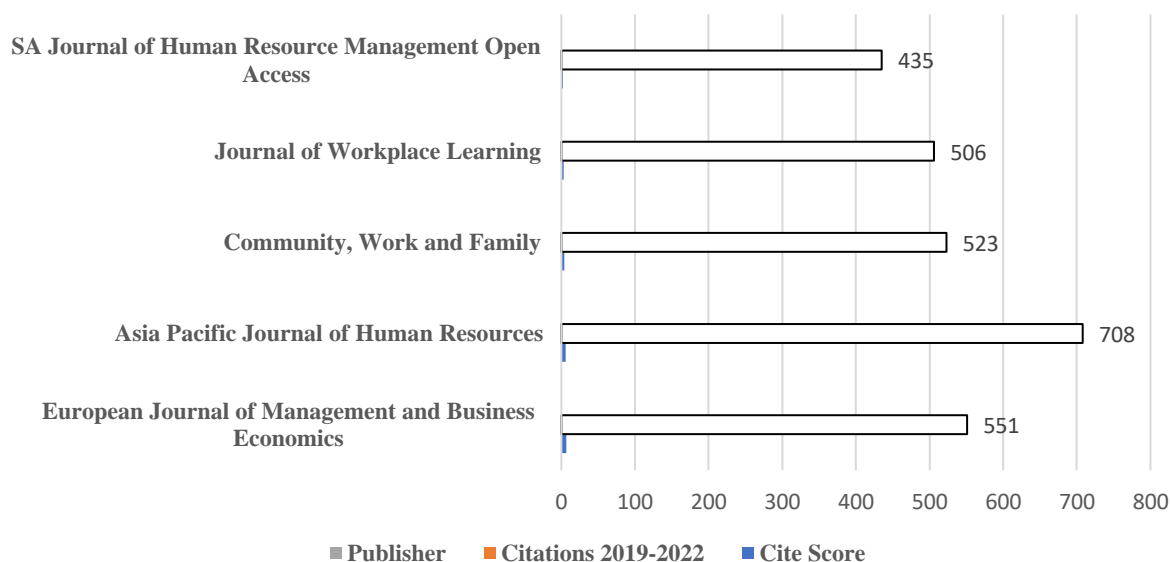
3.3 Analysis of Top Journals

The result shows a famous publisher maintains the most productive journal. Emerald was the publisher of the most productive journal and the fourth journal, Community, Work and Family. Wiley Blackwell published the second journal Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources. Routledge published the third journal, and SAGE published the fifth journal. The fifth journal SA Journal of Human Resource Management, has the total publications after the fourth, the Journal of Workplace Learning, with the most publications, 160. The third journal, Community, Work and Family, has 130 publications. The second journal Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources, has 124 publications, and the European Journal of Management and Business Economics has 84 publications. The citation score shows that one journal has a cite score of more than 6, and the least cite score is 2.1. The result indicated SA Journal of Human Resource Management has the highest number of publications. Still, the cite score is 2.1, lesser among all other journals, which indicates it needs to be more frequently cited. The table will be a guideline for academics to see the research related to the workplace in these relevant journals.

Table 2. Top Journals on basis of Cite Score

Sr. no	Journal Name	Cite Score	Highest Percentile	Citation 2019-2022	Document	Publisher
1	European Journal of Management and Business Economics	6.6	89% 32/302 Finance	551	84	Emerald Insight
2	Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources	5.7	79% 46/226 Organizational Behavior and Human Resource Management	708	124	Wiley Blackwell
3	Community, Work and Family	4.0	84% 217/1415 Sociology and Political Science	523	130	Routledge
4	Journal of Workplace Learning	3.2	70% 88/298 Development	506	160	Emerald Group Publishing
5	SA Journal of Human Resource Management <i>Open Access</i>	2.1	66% 46/135 Demography	435	211	SAGE

Figure 3: Analysis of Top Journals on the Basis of Cite Score



3.4 Analysis of Top 10 authors

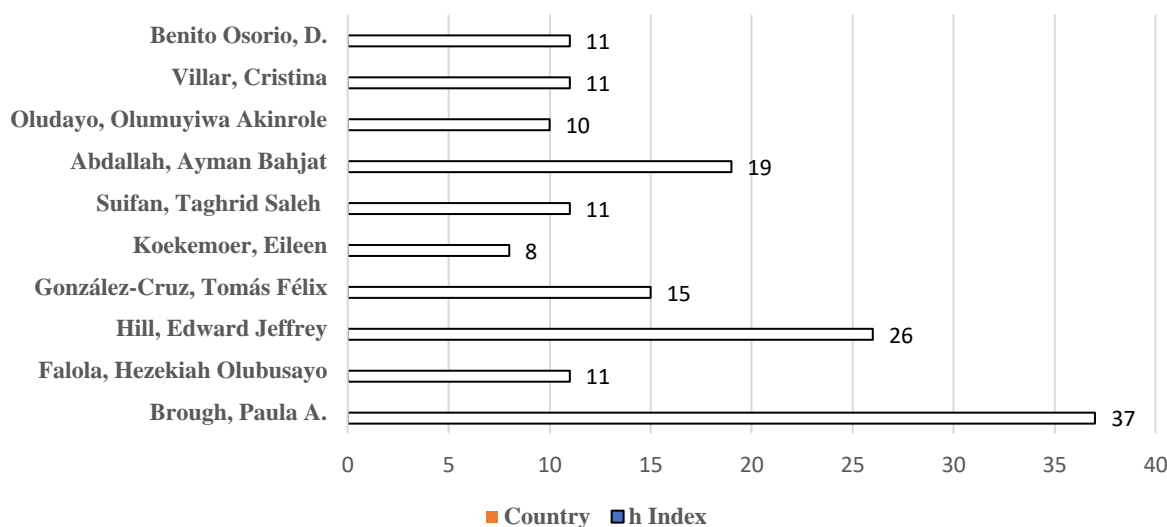
The top author in the field of work-life balance policies is affiliated with six countries the United States, Nigeria, Spain, Australia, Jordan, and South Africa. The authors at numbers 1, 6, 8, and 10 are the first authors in their paper. Some of the authors in the list are the second authors in the paper, and only two authors in the list are the last or second last authors in the

paper. The authors listed in the top authors list indicate the author's affiliation with different institutions and show that research is conducted in different areas. Brough, Paula from Australia is a top author on the list. He has worked on 112 documents and has 37 h-index. Hezekiah Olubusayo Falola on the second number and Olumuyiwa Akinrole Oludayo on the eighth number, is associated with Nigeria. The third author is associated with Brigham Young University in the United States. He has worked on 62 documents with an h-index of 26. The tenth and last authors have worked on 25 documents, has an 11 h-index, and belong to Spain.

Table 3. Top 10 Authors

Sr.no	Author	Documents	h-index	Affiliation	City	Country/Territory
1	<u>Brough, Paula A.</u>	112	37	Griffith University	Brisbane	Australia
2	Falola, Hezekiah Olubusayo	65	11	Covenant University	Ota	Nigeria
3	<u>Hill, Edward Jeffrey</u>	62	26	Brigham Young University	Provo	United States
4	<u>González-Cruz, Tomás Félix</u>	31	15	Universitat de València	Valencia	Spain
5	<u>Koekemoer, Eileen</u>	31	8	University of Pretoria	Pretoria	South Africa
6	<u>Suifan, Taghrid Saleh</u>	29	11	The University of Jordan	Amman	Jordan
7	<u>Abdallah, Ayman Bahjat</u>	28	19	The University of Jordan	Amman	Jordan
8	<u>Oludayo, Olumuyiwa Akinrole</u>	28	10	Covenant University, Department of Business Management	Ota	Nigeria
9	<u>Villar, Cristina</u>	28	11	Universitat de València	Valencia	Spain
10	<u>Benito Osorio, D.</u>	25	11	Universidad Rey Juan Carlos	Madrid	Spain

Figure 4: Analysis of Top Ten Authors



4. Discussion

The findings of this study shed light on the evolving landscape of work-life balance (WLB) policy research, revealing significant trends, geographic contributions, and avenues for future exploration. The steady rise in publications since the 20th century underscores the growing recognition of WLB policies as critical to organizational success and employee well-being. This trend is particularly evident in the period between 2000 and 2023, with 2020 marking a peak in publication activity, likely reflecting an intensified focus on WLB policies due to global shifts in work dynamics during the COVID-19 pandemic. The geographic distribution of publications highlights a significant imbalance, with developed nations such as Spain and the United States leading the field. This dominance may be attributed to greater resources for academic research and heightened organizational awareness of WLB policies in these regions. However, this pattern suggests a need for greater attention to WLB policy research in developing economies, where cultural, economic, and institutional contexts might yield unique insights and challenges. Expanding research efforts in underrepresented regions could provide a more holistic understanding of WLB policies and their implications. The identification of the top 10 authors and affiliations from diverse nations and territories offers a valuable resource for fostering research collaboration. Building partnerships across institutions and countries can enhance the richness of WLB research by integrating diverse perspectives and methodologies. Such collaboration can also support the dissemination of best practices and the development of context-sensitive policies that accommodate varying cultural and economic conditions.

5. Theoretical Implications

The paper highlights the disparity in research focus between developing and developed nations. Developing countries, such as Nigeria and Kenya, are increasingly emphasizing WLB policies to address the unique socio-economic and cultural challenges their workforce faces, providing insights into how regional factors influence WLB dynamics. It identifies key variables associated with WLB policies, such as flexible working arrangements, workplace support,

employee satisfaction, retention, and organizational performance. This diversification underscores the multidimensional impact of WLB policies on both individual and organizational outcomes. The research finds a significant growth in publications after 2008, suggesting that global events (e.g., economic crises, increased globalization, and digitalization) may have spurred interest in employee well-being and performance. By analyzing keywords and thematic trends, the paper provides insights into how WLB policies intersect with disciplines like human resource management, organizational behavior, and sociology. This reflects the evolution of WLB from a niche HR topic to a broader organizational and societal concern. The study reveals that while countries like the USA and Spain lead in research volume, developing nations are tailoring WLB policies to their socio-economic contexts, offering a fresh perspective on how WLB strategies must adapt to regional differences. The novelty of employing bibliometric analysis provides a structured and quantitative method to understand trends, identify research gaps, and assess the prominence of WLB-related studies over time. This methodology itself is an insight into how to approach complex, interdisciplinary research areas. The findings underscore the importance of integrating flexible working arrangements and workplace support systems into WLB policies to enhance employee performance and satisfaction. This bridges the gap between theoretical research and actionable policymaking.

6. Conclusion

The study's analysis of keywords reveals an evolution in research priorities, highlighting both overlooked and widely studied areas within the WLB domain. This insight offers a roadmap for future research, encouraging scholars to address underexplored topics and expand the scope of inquiry. For instance, investigating the intersection of WLB policies with emerging issues such as remote work, digital burnout, and workforce diversity could provide valuable contributions to the field. In summary, this study provides a foundational understanding of WLB policy research, offering valuable insights into publication trends, research hotspots, and collaborative opportunities. By addressing the gaps identified in this analysis and expanding research to underrepresented regions and topics, scholars can contribute to a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of WLB policies and their far-reaching implications for organizations and employees alike.

7. Future Research Directions

There is a growing need for sector-specific studies, particularly in industries characterized by high stress and long working hours, such as healthcare, IT, and education. Understanding the nuanced impacts of work-life balance (WLB) policies within these sectors could provide tailored and actionable insights. Additionally, comparative research examining the effectiveness of WLB policies in developing versus developed economies could offer valuable perspectives for customizing policies based on economic and cultural contexts. Longitudinal studies are particularly crucial to observe the long-term impacts of WLB policies on employee performance, satisfaction, and retention. Investigating barriers to implementing these

policies—such as organizational culture, management resistance, or resource constraints—can help policymakers and practitioners design actionable and sustainable strategies.

Future research should also explore the interaction between WLB policies and variables such as gender, age, ethnicity, and family structures to address the diverse needs of employees. Expanding the scope of outcome measures beyond traditional metrics like performance and satisfaction to include mental health, work engagement, and innovation could provide a more holistic understanding of policy impacts. Furthermore, examining the influence of leadership styles and managerial support on the adoption and effectiveness of WLB policies could yield actionable insights for leadership development and training programs. By addressing these research directions, scholars can advance the understanding of work-life balance policies and their broader implications for employee well-being and organizational success.

8. Limitations of the Study

The researchers invested significant time and effort in conducting a bibliometric analysis. Initially, the study was restricted to keywords related to work-life balance policies and employee performance. During the research process, it was observed that the term "work-life balance policies" is referenced using various terms such as "work-life balance arrangements," "work-life balance policy," and "work-life balance initiatives." Future researchers may consider refining their search strings to focus on work-life balance policies and explore additional related policies and initiatives for a more comprehensive analysis. Since this is a general study, it encompasses all terms associated with work-life balance policies without limiting itself to a specific field or domain. However, future researchers can draw upon the findings of this study to guide further specialized research activities.

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